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The Twelve Months.—

正月十五湯圓子	二月驚蟄抱簋子	三月清明填標子
四月芒種栽秧子	五月端陽喫糰子	六月六來扇扇子
七月中 燒箔子	八月中秋喫餅子	九月重陽醪糟子
十月初一穿襖子	冬月間烤烘籠子	臘月三十貼對子

On the 15th of the first moon we eat sweet dumplings.

In the second moon the insects stir and we feed silk worms.

In the third moon comes clear brightness and we put up grave-flags.

In the fourth moon is the busy season and we plant rice.

In the fifth moon comes the dragon festival and we eat rice dumplings.

In the sixth moon comes the great heat and we use our fans.

In the seventh moon there is a festival and we burn paper money.

In the eighth moon is the mid-autumn festival and we eat moon cakes.

In the ninth moon there comes a festival and we eat fermented rice.

In the tenth moon the cold comes and we put on our wadding.

In the eleventh moon it gets colder and we light our fire-baskets.

In the twelfth moon comes the time to put up New Year scrolls.

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The digits.—

大指拇 二指弟 中三娘 王夥契 身小巴兒子出不得氣

The thumb is the elder brother, the forefinger is the younger, the middle finger is the aunt, the fourth the chief partner, but the youngest piggie is almost smothered to death.

The Bamboo grove.—

京竹極	苦竹極	對門對戶對親家	親家兒子會跑馬
親家女會剪花	大姊剪的靈芝草	二姊剪的牡丹花	
三姊剪不來	丟下剪刀紡棉花	紡了三丈三大哥	
二哥縫件夏布衫	三哥說我心不平	把我嫁在高山苦竹林	
要柴燒柴又高	要水喫水又深	打涇花鞋不當緊	
打涇羅裙一千針			

The green bamboo and the bitter bamboo

Were intermarried relations living in opposite doors.

The sons on one side were brave cavaliers

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BOOK VI. TIMES AND SEASONS (四季), *ssü ch'i*

THE SEASONS OF THE YEAR (二十四節)

Ying ch'un (迎春). Meeting the spring is the farmer's annual holiday. Great crowds go to the city to see the spring ox and the official procession. On the morning of the day, the various small officials of a district city make their way to the magistrate's office, where they get their pay for that day. Later in the forenoon, the magistrate, dressed as a court official, with 16 men bearing his chair and 16 pulling it, comes out in state. Even the yamen underlings ride horses and wear degraded men's hats on this occasion. They proceed to the east gate and meet spring in the form of an earthen ox and an image spoken of as the *mang shên* (芒神) or ox driver. The spring ox is taken to a field on the east of the city, attached to a plough and taken a few times up and down the field, with the magistrate after it; the magistrate then approaches the real plough and buffalo, which has been prepared and decorated for the purpose; this is called *kung ching* (躬耕), personal ploughing. After worshipping the spring ox and driver, he returns to his office by the south or west gate. That day he gives a feast to all his underlings who have congratulated him on being the priest of spring. This is the only day in many officials' lives when they really can be great. Sometimes he rides in an open chair with

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796 garlands of flowers and branches over and around him. The
805 day costs him some hundreds of strings of cash and is one of
the gala days of the year.

● The ox is made by special instructions from the official, and great interest is taken in all the details of colour both of the ox and the driver. If the ox is yellow, the people say that the year will be a fruitful one, and a bumper harvest is expected. If it is red, fire and calamity will be rife; if white, mourning will be very plentiful; if green, plague will ravage the country; if black, sickness and disease will be plentiful. The spring will be early or late according as the tail is uplifted or downhanging. If the ox is lying down it is also an indication of a late spring. If the garments of the driver are stripped off and trousers tucked up then an early spring is expected, but if its shoes are on and down at the heels the spring will be late. If the clothing is properly on with girdle and garters complete, then the spring will be an ordinary one.

The ancient custom of making a mud ball in the shape of a drum during the winter and breaking it at the opening of spring *chi t'u ku* (擊土鼓) is probably the origin of the spring ox.

Li ch'un or *ta ch'un* is to begin spring. This is the day following the meeting of spring, and the crowd is much smaller. On this day the farmers will not sweep their floors for fear of sweeping away Mother Earth who has to bring forth her fruits, neither will they disturb her by sowing or digging. The spring ox and driver having been taken the day previous to the yamen court, the official, dressed again in the robes of the priest of spring, makes an offering to them, after which he strikes the first blow at the ox which is speedily demolished by the crowd and carried off to the homes and the fields of the people. The calf inside it is taken and carried to some family which has no sons. The driver is burned and the whole cleared out of sight and the ceremony is now over. Among the rustics all this is very important, and some even believe that if there was no spring ox there could hardly be any harvest.

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Yü shui (雨水), spring rain. At this season flowers are transplanted and trees grafted. Aged people, who need to *chieh hsien* (接限) do so with the greatest benefit, they believe, at this season. (See *Sorcery*.) 796 805

Ching chih (驚蟄), the time of moving insects. At this season snakes come forth from hibernation and bees emerge from their hives. The silk-worms' eggs are now taken on to the bodies or into the beds of people, to be hatched.

Ch'un fên, spring equinox, a general holiday for farmers, called the master's gathering, 當家會. No one goes into his field or garden on that day lest he should be troubled with birds and insects through the year. On this date the king of birds is worshipped.

Ch'ing ming, clear brightness. At this season, great crowds of people visit the graveyards, *shang fên* (上墳), and put flags on the graves. These flags are said to show the grave is still attended, but in some places their purpose is said to be to call the spirit. Incense and paper are burned, and food prepared at home is carried here and eaten picnic style. Many go to weep at the graves, but many more go for a day's pleasure, to drink wine and play at "Morra," and many become deeply intoxicated. It is believed that the departed ancestors present themselves and partake of the offered food. At the New Year and the 7th moon feast the spirits of the ancestors return to the home, but at this season, the living visit the habitations of the dead. In Kwan Hsien this feast is spoken of as *lao wa* (老鴉) *hui*, or crows' festival.

At this time the city god goes to relieve the orphan spirits *shang ku* (賞孤), by burning the cash paper. On his return journey, the district magistrate goes to meet the idol procession.

Han shih (寒食) *chieh*, the cold food feast. This is an ancient feast held the day preceding *ch'ing ming*. Formerly no one lighted fires in the house on this day, in remembrance of a certain *Chieh Chih t'ui* (介之推) who was a henchman of one of the princes of the Lieh Kuo period. When on one occasion the prince was about to die of starvation, Chieh Chih

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805 t'ui cut off a piece of his own flesh and gave it to the prince to eat, and thus saved his life. When the prince got to the seat of power, he forgot his faithful henchman, whereupon he fled with his mother, having a willow twig stuck in his hat, to a certain Mien Shan 綿山. When the prince eventually recollected his friend and benefactor he sent men to seek him; Though it was reported that he was hidden on a certain mountain, they could not find him. So in desperation they set fire to the brushwood on the mountain to force him out, but he would not yield and was burned to death; and ever since that time some remembrance has been kept of him; though no one refrains from lighting a fire on that day as formerly, still many people wear a twig of the willow tree, either in the hat or hair, in remembrance of him.

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221 *Ku yü*, rice rain. This is the time when the rice seed bed is sown. Rain and sunshine are both needed at this time.

Li hsia, beginning of summer. Summer is believed to come from the south.

Hsiao man, small fullness. That is, the *hsiao ch'un* or spring crop is ready for reaping in order to clear the land for the summer crop.

Mang chung, hurrying to plant the rice crop. This is the busiest season of the year, with reaping and ploughing, harrowing and planting.

Hsia chih (夏至), the midsummer solstice. At this season the male and female principles are unequal and therefore have to be avoided.

The people now begin to count the days till the dog days or 三伏天 commence. If the three *fu* (伏) are complete, there will be 30 days, but they rarely are complete, the autumn coming in before these days have run through their course, but after autumn there are still twenty-four autumn tigers, 秋老虎, following on the *san fu*. In each Chinese moon there are three *kêng* (庚), that is, one in every ten days; after midsummer three of these *kêng* are counted and then the dog days begin, and may last from 21 to 29 days.

Hsiao shu, small heat, and *ta shu*, great heat; these two cover the period just spoken of as the dog days.

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Li ch'iu. The beginning of autumn, which is believed to come from the west. The people are pleased if it is very hot on this date as it means there will be dry grain in the granaries. Again, if this day should happen to be a *chia* (甲), it will rain for 120 days, if a *ping* (丙), it will be fine for that time. 805
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Ch'u shu, the finish of the heat; after this date the water is drained from the general crop of rice.

Pai lu, white dew. Cool weather arrives.

Ch'iu fen, mid-autumn equinox.

Han lu, cold dew. At this season the farmers sow turnips, plant cabbages, sow tobacco seeds, the tobacco seedlings standing all through the winter, ready to be planted out in the spring.

Shuang Chiang, descending frost. The military official goes out at this time to meet the frost which is said to appear as a horse-headed woman. This is the time when all nature dies, and the officials follow after Heaven's idea and carry out such executions as may be necessary.

Li tung, the beginning of the winter, which is believed to come from the north.

Hsiao hsueh, small snow, and *Ta hsueh*, great snow. These two periods cover a part of the winter in which it is said the pot cannot be heated.

Tung chih, midwinter. The ancients kept this as New Year. At this season the people worship their ancestors 始祖, and the officials worship the tablet to the reigning emperor. This is said by many to be the root of the year. At this season the family hog is killed or the meat purchased with which the *La jou* (臘豚), or New Year bacon, is prepared. From midwinter begins the counting of the nines until eighty-one days is reached. In this connection the following stanzas are in common use: 805

The first and second nines, the hands are blown for cold.
The third and fourth nines, the frost kills pigs and dogs.
The fifth and sixth nines, the frost kills the old ox.

205 The seventh and eighth nines, the hands still hug the clothes. Nine-nines are eighty-one, the farmer ploughs his land.

Hsiao han and *ta* (大) *han*, small cold and great cold. These two periods cover part of the eighty-one days of cold. This period has also a saying—小寒大寒凍死老蠻, small and great cold freeze the old aboriginal to death.

NEW YEAR (過年), *kuo nien*.

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805 As soon as the last moon comes people begin to be anxious as to how they are to collect and pay off their debts; much scheming and quarrelling and even suicide is the outcome.

Tao ya (倒牙). The last meat day of the year. Workmen and apprentices are expected to receive pork twice each month; and an apprentice after he has eaten 72 of these pork feasts is supposed to be a full fledged workman. This is the last of these *tao ya* for that year and it falls on the 16th of the last moon.

On the 20th of the last moon the official seals up his official seals, *Fêng yin*. The seal is put on a table and incense and candles burned in its honour; the official then bows down and worships it. Afterwards it is taken and put into its own case; this case is then enclosed in two others which are locked and sealed, after which it is again worshipped and put away for the New Year holidays. During this period no important official business is transacted, except for cases of preserving peace and life.

K'ang (炕) *la jou*; smoking the New Year bacon has to be done after midwinter; if done before, the meat will not keep good. The poor buy a piece of pork and make their bacon; but the rich kill their own pigs. This is an important affair in the country districts; before the pig is brought forth for the slaughter the master of the house puts cash paper on the ground where the pig will be killed; three sticks of incense and two candles are stuck in the ground round about the spot. When the pig is brought forth the master of the house kneels and worships it, saying, "We are going to kill you for use at

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the New Year season, but in the next life may you become a man." After killing the animal the bucket containing the blood is taken and offered to the family gods, the cash paper on which some blood has dropped is placed on the family altar. This is called *hsien hsüeh ch'ien*, offering blood cash. The pig's blood, after being offered to the idol, is taken and made into black puddings.

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After the 20th of the 12th moon the evil influences which have been governing the year are removed, and any and every part of the house may be turned topsy-turvy; so the housewives take advantage of this liberty and have a house cleaning. After the dust is swept down, the windows are papered with fresh paper for the New Year season.

The kitchen god is sent off to make his yearly report to the Pearly Emperor. Before he goes sugar candy and tea are offered to him and some even make a written petition regarding the affairs of the family. This petition, called a *tsao shu*, kitchen god petition, is burned at his shrine. He is supposed to leave on the 23rd and come back on the 24th of the last moon, but in some places it is the last night of the New Year before the returning ceremony is observed; when he does come back there is much idolatry with a great deal of importance attached to the event.

Owing to business being largely suspended for some days, and the general need of money by everybody, great quantities of idolatrous and eatable supplies are laid in during the last week of the year. Among the rich plenty of sweetmeats are prepared in the home by a specially engaged cook.

Gratuities are given to servants and assistants at the close of the year.

About the 24th there is a feast to wind up the year, *t'uan* (團) *nien*, when the whole household is expected to be present. Before eating, the ancestral tablet is worshipped and the food is offered to the ancestors. It is implied that the spirits of the ancestors return to the home at this season; for this reason no outsider is permitted to partake of this meal, but friends and acquaintances are sometimes invited by the less superstitious.

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805 Spring scrolls, *ch'un tui-tzu*, are put up on either side of the door and on the lintel. A good business is done during the last few weeks by the scholars, who write scrolls for the small sum of from 12 to 30 cash per set.

Fresh door gods are pasted up by nearly every family.

Five sheets of lucky paper or tin foil, *hua ch'ien* or *hsi ch'ien*, are hung up over the door; these remain till business is about to be begun when they are taken down and burned.

The barbers are busy at this season, but after the 16th of the last moon many of the formalities of barbering are dispensed with and only that which is necessary to make a person clean is done in the barber's shop.

Paper clothing and money for the ancestors are burned on the last day of the old year.

In the hill districts the people go to the graves and invite the spirits of their ancestors to return on this last night of the year, when a fire is lighted for their comfort in the chief room of the house and offerings of food prepared for them; but even when the spirits are not invited their presence in the house is implied by every act.

To fire off crackers, *fang huo pao*, is part of almost every act of the New Year season.

On the last night of the year, the younger generations make obeisance to the elder, while the elders make the juveniles presents of money to pass the New Year season.

The rich also make presents to the poor, the gentry to officials; the officials to gentry, etc. The presents are carried in an open tray with a card accompanying. Official presents generally consist of pears, scented rice, oranges, tea and sea dainties. At this season such men as the keepers of the city gates, the night watchmen, street police, come with a present which is only for show and, in return, they expect their annual gratuities.

A card is taken round late on the last night of the year and pasted on the doors of friends and acquaintances; taking leave of the old year, *ts'ü nien tsieh ts'ü* (辭年帖子), or *men ch'ien* (門箋). In the morning some doors are pretty well covered with them.

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Very early on the first morning of the year the head of each household goes outside his dwelling and offers paper and incense, tea and wine, to the New Year. 796
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There is a custom of going out for a walk before dawn, *ch'u hsing* (出行), or *ch'u t'ien fang* (出天方). If any one is met, no words pass, and what one hears is an indication of what his year will bring of good or bad luck, peace or quarrelling. This custom is also spoken of as *chieh hsi shên*, to welcome the pleased spirit. The almanac tells the direction in which the spirit may be met.

Picture gods of wealth are taken round from door to door and sold for a few cash, the vendor using lucky words and good wishes for the year.

People mutually pay calls, *pai ta' nien*, on the 2nd of the moon, and receive and give cakes and sweetmeats.

On the 5th, newly married people go to visit their relatives, *pai hsin nien*. The 5th of the first moon is also known as *p'o wu* (破五), breaking the fifth, after which a good many people begin work and business.

At the New Year season everyone wears his best, and everyone tries to have something new for fear of otherwise becoming a beggar during the year. Flour balls or *t'ang yuan* (湯元) are eaten so that worldly affairs may be good "all round." Dough strips are eaten by almost everyone and are a favourite kind of present, because it "eats long," which may mean long life or abundance of wealth. In the same way stale rice is often eaten at this time, as it is a good omen of plenty in the barns for the coming year. Beggars are often given money on their first asking, as an omen that money will be easy during the year. See under *Superstitious Dread*.

Gambling, *tu po* (賭博), is one of the many curses that come to an idle Chinese population. Up to the 5th, no one pretends to try to stop it. After that date an official proclamation forbids it, but everyone knows this is merely for official self-protection in case of trouble; nearly everyone gambles at this season from the highest officials down to the poorest of the people, and many youths are ruined by it.

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805 The season is an opportunity for visiting, *tson jên hu* (走人戶), much taken advantage of by the women and girls, who are largely confined to the house at other times of the year; no one goes empty-handed as that would be very unlucky; but presents of cakes, sweets, bacon, etc., are often handed round several times during this visiting season.

After the 5th some shops begin business, but very often only half the shutters are taken down. No credit is given and no past debts will be asked for. The first customer will be allowed to have the goods at his own price, as it would be unlucky to turn away the first comer without doing business.

A lamp is lighted at the door of each house. In some places the residents are fined if they neglect this custom; the idea is that if the streets are lighted no demon will come to do damage.

The Dragon Lantern festival is held on the 15th. A lantern in several lengths is made, with a head after the likeness of a dragon's. Each length is supported by a light pole and carried by a young, lusty fellow. The different lengths are joined together by red calico, and are swung round and round so as to appear somewhat like a worm writhing. The dragon is the king of the scaly tribe and hence is feared by all the demons. First it is carried to a temple and the idols are worshipped; afterwards it is paraded through the streets and carried into any courtyard that will receive it. The streets are lighted with many-coloured lanterns, and the dragon lantern, lighted up, is paraded round the streets with two men carrying a *pao* or precious thing in front. Huge crowds collect, and a rowdy evening is the result with much stealing, hustling and jolting. This is a very ancient custom, and the chief idea is that the dragon drives away pestilence.

The lion lantern, *shih têng*, is made up by two men walking with bent backs; one manages the head and the other the tail. A huge cloth with a lion's head painted on the front and a tail sewn to the other end makes the lion. After having visited the temples, the procession parades the streets with a priest in front leading the lion. The priest carries a brush in his hand. If invited, they enter any house to drive

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away pestilence. On the streets high platforms are made of square tables piled one on top of the other, and on these the lion-actors perform acrobatic feats of jumping, rolling over to the ground, standing on the head, etc.

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The ox lantern is an ox-head painted on a bamboo sieve, with a cloth body and tail. It is used in country towns with the idea that it will bring a full harvest for that year.

A rabbit lantern is pulled along the street by two persons; one, dressed like a Tibetan, leads the rabbit, and another, dressed like a Tibetan woman, drives it. This is connected with the idea that the Tibetan is not only wealthy, but also brings in wealth.

There are also fish, turtle, tortoise, prawn and crab lanterns; the *ao shan* (鰲山) lantern has camphor mixed with the oil and sheds a pretty green light.

There are displays, which are both elaborate and expensive, of *yen ho chia* (烟火架), fireworks. In many of these fireworks much medicine is mixed with the oil; the idea seems to be the driving away of pestilence from the home or community.

The *ch'ing ch'un chiu* (請春酒) is a feast generally given by a landlord to his tenant farmers from the 5th to the 10th of the first moon. Sometimes it is held later and may even be in the second month.

Riddles are written and hung up over the door of the house, and in the light of the lantern festival, people guess the meaning and then, if right, jump up and pull them down; rewards of fruit and sweetmeats are often given to those who make a right guess.

At this time the people eat flour balls with treacle inside; these balls are now called *yüan hsiao* (元宵). There seems to be a kind of concert held in the home, and young men and maidens sing and trip in the form of the figure eight both on the street and in the home. The ballads they sing are called *nung an ko*, farmers' peaceful ballads; but they have now lost that ideal and have degenerated into mere *yin ko* (淫歌) sensual songs.

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Opening accounts, *k'ai chang*, is not done till after the *hsi ch'ien* (禧錢) has been burned. When this takes place much idolatry is observed, crackers fired off and all to get what is spoken of as *k'ai chi* (吉) *chang*, a lucky start in business for the New Year.

Official seals are released *k'ai yin* generally on the 19th of the first moon. A similar ceremony is observed as at the sealing up time.

To visit the graves of ancestors before the 15th of the first moon is called *shang nien fên*; this is done by those who for any reason were hindered from doing so during the last moon of the year. Those graves not attended to before the 15th are known as *yeh kwei fên* (野鬼墳). The reason graves are mostly repaired in the last moon is because the influences controlling the year are in abeyance during the last days of the old year.

To steal some person's vegetables, *t'ou ch'ing* (偷青) on the 15th of the first moon, is lucky.

Children return to school, *shang hsüeh*, any time after the 8th of the first moon; they have to pay their respects to the master by bowing and knocking their heads, and giving a small present of money. In the case of a gentleman inviting a private tutor for his home he has to make a written agreement the year before as to what salary he will give and when and in what currency; and what present he will give at the feasts. This is called *hsia p'in* (下聘). A common salary for a master of the old school is anything from 40 to 80 strings of cash with board and lodging, with few holidays except at the 5th and 7th moon feasts. When the time arrives to welcome a new tutor, the gentleman sends a chair and servant to escort him. On his arrival a feast is spread, the tablet to Confucius is worshipped by the head of the house with the three-fold *k'o t'qu*. The scholars must also bend and worship the tablet to the sage of learning and wisdom on beginning their studies.

Then (大人做生意, 娃娃檢狗屎) adults go to business and the children to gather dog manure. That is, every one must get to work.

753 and bites people. At this period the strength is great and
 755 no one can bind him. I have heard of them putting
 medicine down the throat of a rabid person by means of a
 bamboo tube and his getting well again.

To curse the mad dog is a special line of sorcery and
 when a person has been bitten he may use this method.

If a person has been bitten it is said to be very unlucky
 for anyone who speaks of it to him. During the 120 days
 onions, kidney beans, bean curd, chicken, eggs, fish and flour
 are avoided. The clanging of gongs or drums makes the
 patient worse.

This kind of trouble is looked upon by the Chinese as a
 retribution for the wickedness of three past generations and
 is classed with being killed by lightning or consumed by fire,
 bitten by a snake or devoured by a tiger.

ECLIPSES AND COMETS (日月食及彗星),

jih yüeh shih, sao hsing

821 The heavenly dog is said to be a star known as *t'ien kou*
 777 *hsing*; it eats the moon, causing eclipse.

Lo hou hsing (羅喉星) is a very unlucky star, which it
 is believed tries to devour the sun at eclipse times. The evil
 spirit from this star is said to have retarded the birth of
 Sakyamuni for six years.

In an eclipse of the sun or moon, it is believed that the
 Emperor or Empress, respectively, has lost virtue.

During an eclipse of the sun, a tub of water is placed in
 the full glare of the sun and the progress of the eclipse is
 watched in the water.

805 The official calendar carefully gives the dates of all
 796 eclipses and particulars as to when they begin and finish.
 Previous to the eclipse a proclamation is issued calling upon
 the people to save the sun or moon. The official sets up an
 altar, and candles and incense are burned thereon while he
 prostrates himself and begs the restoration of the luminary to
 its normal size; the *chiao kuan* or head of the religious sects
 goes round the altar beating a gong till the eclipse is over.
 In each house an instrument for making a noise is used to

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frighten away the evil dog. All the temple drums and gongs are lustily beaten till the eclipse is ended.

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The year that the Emperor Kuang Hsü died, the people declared that the sun had become red like blood, which indicated that the dynasty had come to an end, or that some great change was about to take place.

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A comet is a very unlucky omen; and the appearance of Halley's comet in 1910-11 brought with it a great deal of unrest and fear. The people believe that it indicates calamity such as war, fire, pestilence, and a change of dynasty. In some places on certain days the doors were unopened for half a day, no water was carried and many did not even drink water as it was rumoured that pestilential vapour was being poured down upon the earth from the comet.

Along with eclipses and comets comes a third herald of change, namely, the bird called the white-tailed swallow. It is said that when the Manchus took China this bird came and killed the canaries and took possession of their cages. In 1911 it is reported to have made its appearance in Ssüch'uan, and when possible it was caught, beheaded, dismembered and thrown to the four winds, as it indicated another foreign invasion of the country.

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SNAKES AND DRAGONS (蛇龍), *shê lung*

The snake is an object both of loathing and reverence among the Chinese. In Ssüch'uan there are many kinds, of different colours and sizes. It is said that the small are snakes (蛇), the medium serpents (蟒), and the large are dragons (龍). A few of the different kinds of snakes as known by the Chinese are herewith given:—

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Sang kên tsü (桑根紫), or *ch'ing kan shê*, the steelyard snake, is red with spots and is very deadly.

Ts'ai hua, the rape-flower snake, a yellowish coloured snake from four to eight feet long and very poisonous.

Ch'ing chu piao, the green snake, just the colour of a green bamboo stem. It is from four to eight feet long and less poisonous than the former ones.